

REMARKS

Please reconsider the rejections of the claims in light of the foregoing amendments and the following arguments and allow the pending claims.

In paragraph 6 of the Office Action mailed January 14, 2004, the Examiner had indicated that claim 27 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim (e.g., claim 24). Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for this preliminary indication of allowability and, therefore, have amended claim 24 to include all the limitations of dependent claim 27.

Claims 18 – 23 and 26 – 27 have been canceled, claims 24 and 29 have been amended and new claim 48 has been added.

In summary, in view of the foregoing arguments and amendments, we respectfully submit that the rejected claims are patentably distinct over the references cited by the Examiner and meet all other statutory requirements. We believe that the present Application is now in complete condition for allowance and, therefore, respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider the rejections in the Office Action and allow this Application.

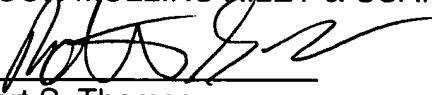
We invite the Examiner to telephone the undersigned should any issues remain after the consideration of this response.

Respectfully requested,

NELSON MULLINS RILEY & SCARBOROUGH

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Date


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